



FEMA

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News Release

FEMA TRANSITIONAL SHELTERING ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE FOR BASTROP COUNTY, TEXAS EVACUEES WITH INACCESSIBLE OR UNLIVABLE HOMES

AUSTIN, Texas – The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), at the request of the state of Texas, has activated its Transitional Sheltering Assistance (TSA) initiative, which allows eligible Texas wildfire evacuees from Bastrop County, who cannot return to their homes, to stay in hotels or motels until more suitable housing accommodations are available.

This federal assistance is intended to provide a place to stay for a longer period of time for evacuees whose neighborhoods are not accessible or whose houses have been destroyed. The initial period of assistance is from **Sept. 11, 2011**, to **Oct. 10, 2011**. However, this federal program will not reimburse applicants for previously incurred hotel expenses. Applicants are responsible for their own meals and for any lodging costs above the authorized allowance. The state of Texas earlier announced programs, which are listed below, that may supplement federal TSA.

"To be eligible to receive this federal assistance you **must** register with FEMA," said Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) Kevin L. Hannes. "Keep in mind the TSA initiative is only a temporary fix. We are working diligently with our state and local partners to develop a long-term housing solution to help people until their homes and communities are repaired or rebuilt. But, again, you must register with FEMA to be able to benefit from this short-term aid."

"We are encouraging wildfire evacuees to learn how state and federal programs can help them get through this very difficult period," said Deputy State Coordinating Officer (SCO) Shari Ramirez-MacKay. "We want to do everything we can to provide assistance to residents whose homes have been destroyed or cannot yet return to their neighborhoods."

You can register for FEMA assistance online at www.disasterassistance.gov or via smart phone at m.fema.gov. Applicants may also call **1-800-621-FEMA (3362)** or **(TTY) 1-800-462-7585**. If you use 711-Relay or Video Relay Services (VRS), call 1-800-621-3362. The toll-free telephone numbers will operate from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. (local time) seven days a week until further notice.

Eligible evacuees must fit the following criteria:

- 1. FEMA must be able to verify the identity of the evacuee;**
- 2. The primary residence of the evacuee must be in one of the counties that has been designated a disaster area; and**
- 3. The primary residence is inaccessible or unlivable due to damage or lack of power.**

TSA allows eligible individuals or families to stay in a hotel or motel for a limited time and have the cost of the room and taxes paid directly to the hotel by FEMA. Meals, telephone calls and other incidental charges are not covered.

The state earlier announced that up to \$250,000 from the non-profit Texas Disaster Relief Fund will be distributed through Combined Community Action Inc. to provide seven-day emergency hotel vouchers to families whose homes have been destroyed by the Bastrop fire. **The fund is intended to supplement - not duplicate - resources provided by FEMA, private insurance companies and non-profit organizations.**

The Texas Disaster Relief Fund gives Texans the opportunity to donate money directly to Texas communities struck by disaster, and donations may be made by calling 1-866-463-7982, or view: www.texasdisasterrelieffund.org for more information. Combined Community Action is also administering flexible assistance cards using up to \$350,000 in federal funding from the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs to cover essential expenses for individuals who meet certain federal income requirements.

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Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-FEMA (3362). For TTY call 800-462-7585.

The mission of the Texas Division of Emergency Management, Texas Department of Public Safety, is to support the citizens of Texas and local jurisdictions as they plan for, respond to, recover from and mitigate the impacts of all hazards, emergencies and disasters. For more information, see: www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem.

FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards. Follow us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/#!/femaregion6>, the R6 Hurricane Preparedness website at www.fema.gov/about/regions/regionvi/updates.shtm and the FEMA Blog at <http://blog.fema.gov>.